

Washington, DC (December 8, 2010) – Congressman Gus Bilirakis (FL-09) last week wrote a letter to FEMA Administrator W. Craig Fugate demanding answers about FEMA’s Fire Prevention and Safety grant program after a recent Department of Homeland Security report shows that it improperly provided money to the controversial group ACORN.

“ACORN has demonstrated it is not worthy of the public’s trust and as I have repeatedly stated, the Department of Homeland Security should not have provided funding to this corrupt enterprise,” said Bilirakis, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Management, Investigations and Oversight.

The report – conducted by the DHS Office of Inspector General - found that ACORN was awarded a \$450,484 Fire Prevention and Safety grant by FEMA in Fiscal Year 2007 even though ACORN failed to demonstrate experience and expertise in fire prevention and safety activities.

As the lead Republican watchdog over DHS, Bilirakis wants to find out why ACORN received grant money and investigate FEMA’s process for awarding and monitoring grants. [Click here to read Rep. Bilirakis’s letter to Administrator Fugate](#)

In September 2009, Bilirakis also demanded that FEMA rescind a \$1 million Fire Prevention and Safety grant to the ACORN Institute of New Orleans from Fiscal Year 2008 and assure legislators that ACORN was not receiving any additional funds.

At that time, FEMA officials announced that the agency had not – and would not - provide this funding to ACORN, an organization that has engaged in questionable, and in some cases unlawful, behavior. However, this policy did not extend to the previously awarded grant from FY07. [Click here to read Rep. Bilirakis’s 2009 letter to Secretary Napolitano](#)

“Scarce homeland security resources should only be provided to reputable organizations that will strengthen our nation’s preparedness, not wasted on those that won’t,” Bilirakis said.

The report also found that FEMA did not perform sufficient oversight of ACORN once the grant was awarded and ACORN neglected to complete activities for which it was responsible under the grant. ACORN could not account for expenditures for more than \$160,000 of the grant money. [Click here to read the Inspector General report](#)